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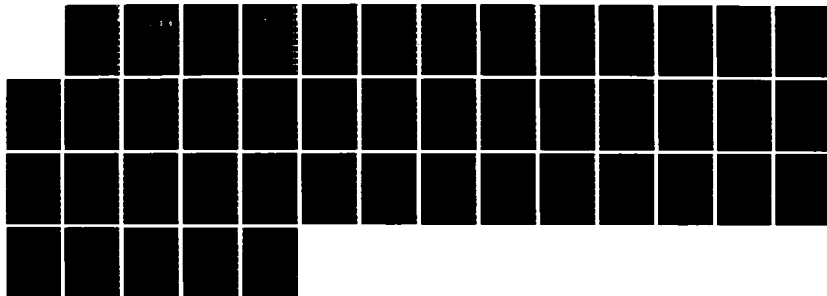
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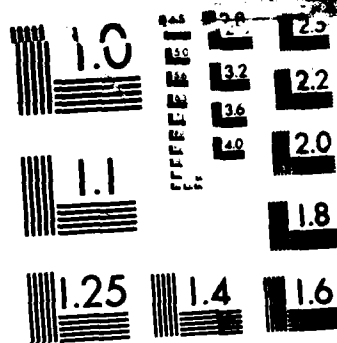
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STUDENT REPORT

SEXUAL HARASSMENT
WITHIN THE
USAF ENLISTED FORCE
MAJOR WILLIAM CANNY, USAF # 86-0475
"insights into tomorrow"

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Submitted to the faculty in partial fulfillment of
requirements for graduation.

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<p>This report examines sexual harassment within the U.S. Air Force active, enlisted force. It specifically examines whether sexual harassment is more likely to occur in particular career/occupational areas. The primary source of data on sexual harassment was survey and interview results from a study entitled <u>Organizational Assessment Study</u>, commissioned by Headquarters, U.S.A.F. The major conclusions are that career areas and occupations are not successful predictors of verbal or physical sexual harassment. Other personal and work-place characteristics associated with verbal and physical harassment are discussed. Also, special ways to prevent and diminish sexual harassment are presented.</p>			
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PREFACE

Since 1964, the number of enlisted women in the United States Air Force has steadily increased. Female airmen also are serving in skills that less than twenty years ago were considered "male jobs." With the increase of female airmen, an issue of interest to many within and outside the Air Force is sexual harassment.

This report examines sexual harassment within the USAF enlisted force. Its aim is to determine if sexual harassment is more likely to occur in particular career areas and to recommend steps to reduce and prevent sexual harassment from occurring. The primary source of data on sexual harassment in the enlisted Air Force was survey and interview results from a study commissioned by the Headquarters, United States Air Force.

The author is indebted to and greatly appreciates the contributions others have made to this report. Major Roger W. Alford, HQ USAF/DPAC, sponsored the report, provided computer-sorted reports of data, and was a source of encouragement and expertise. Major Stephen L. Havron, ACSC/EDOWA, constructively commented on major and minor aspects of the report. Colonel Douglas A. Patterson, AU/CADRE, provided valuable suggestions and criticisms. Mrs. Regina Lazarchik expertly typed the report. The author also recognizes and especially appreciates the extraordinary patience, support, and understanding provided by his spouse, Jane, throughout this endeavor.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Major William Canny is a personnel officer with extensive experience at all major Air Force organizational levels. He has served as an enlisted skills manager at Headquarters, United States Air Force, and was a member of a Congressionally directed study team that examined personnel force matters. He worked as a personnel programs officer at Headquarters, United States Air Forces in Europe, Ramstein Air Base and was a base personnel officer at Kohn Air Base, Germany. Additionally, he has had broad experience in the initial recruiting, classification and assignment of Air Force officer and enlisted personnel. Major Canny has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania with a major in Psychology. He has also earned a Master of Arts degree in Psychology from Saint Mary's University, San Antonio, Texas, and a Master of Science degree in Management from Troy State University, Troy, Alabama. Major Canny's professional military education includes Squadron Officers' School in residence and Air Command and Staff College by correspondence. He was the first recipient of the 1984 General Robert J. Dixon Manpower and Personnel Award.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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REPORT NUMBER 86-0475

AUTHOR(S) MAJOR WILLIAM CANNY, USAF

TITLE SEXUAL HARASSMENT WITHIN THE USAF ENLISTED FORCE

I. Purpose: To determine if sexual harassment of both men and women, which occurs within the U.S. Air Force active enlisted force, is more likely to occur in particular career areas or job specialties, and to recommend steps to reduce/prevent sexual harassment.

II. Problem: In the last two decades, the number of female airmen has steadily increased. At the end of Fiscal Year 1984, women comprised 11.4 percent of the active enlisted Air Force. With the growing number of female airmen, the subject of sexual harassment within the U.S.A.F. enlisted force has come under close scrutiny. Predictors of where and with what severity sexual harassment occurs within the Air Force are not available. Successful predictors of the likely occurrence of sexual harassment and specific recommendations for preventing/combating such harassment afford commanders and supervisors the opportunity to improve Air Force units.

III. Data: The primary source of data on sexual harassment in the enlisted Air Force was survey and interview results from a study entitled Organizational Assessment Study. The study was commissioned by Headquarters, United States Air Force and dealt specifically with verbal and physical harassment. The Organizational Assessment Study focussed on a carefully

CONTINUED

selected sample of 30 bases and 14,639 enlisted personnel. Much effort was spent to ensure this enlisted sample was representative of the entire Air Force active enlisted force.

In addition to the data provided by almost 15,000 airmen, the Organizational Assessment Study also interviewed two senior officers (usually the wing commander and the deputy commander for maintenance) at each of the 30 surveyed bases. While these senior officers were not representative of all Air Force senior officers, the interview results nevertheless provided valuable insights and perspectives.

IV. Conclusion: A higher percentage of female airmen (26.6 percent) than male airmen (6.6 percent) reported being verbally harassed within the previous four weeks. Functional working areas and job specialty were not statistically significant predictors of verbal harassment. Air Force enlisted women who were most likely to report incidents of verbal harassment: worked in larger groups; tended to rate their supervisors lower than those who were not harassed; worked in somewhat or very slow work-pace environments; worked outdoors, in hazardous environments, in extreme temperatures; experienced personnel and/or equipment shortages in their work groups the previous week; educationally, had some college and beyond; and had less than four years of active duty. Most men and women reported that the verbal harassment that occurred within the previous four weeks had been resolved.

The reported incidence of physical harassment was much less than that of verbal harassment. Of enlisted women, 6.2 percent reported being physically harassed within the last four weeks; 1.7 percent of male airmen reported similar harassment. As with verbal harassment, one's functional working category and AFSC, were not successful predictors of physical harassment. Female airmen who were most likely to report incidents of physical harassment: worked in large groups; tended to rate their supervisors lower than those who were not harassed; experienced equipment shortages in their work groups the previous week; worked more than 40 hours the previous week; and were not married to another military member. As with verbal harassment, most men and women reported that the physical harassment experienced within the previous four weeks had been resolved.

CONTINUED

While the Organizational Assessment Study is the largest and most encompassing study of the effects of women that the Air Force has sponsored to date, certain aspects of sexual harassment require further investigation. For example, simple accounts of harassment do not shed light on whether one person harasses one, or more than one victim, and whether an harasser harasses only within his/her own gender. Also, "harasser-harassée ratios" (e.g. how numerically more men than women may be harassed, while proportionately more women are victims), and the impact of "perceived harassed" (i.e. harassment without a perpetrator) deserves further research and analysis. While there is little doubt that physical and verbal harassment do occur in the Air Force, judging the severity of self-reported harassment is difficult at best.

Commanders, supervisors and managers have a wide range of administrative and judicial measures available to punish sexual harassers. There are also a number of ways commanders, supervisors and managers can stop, or at least diminish, sexual harassment.

U. Recommendations: Women are an integral part of the Air Force and one can expect their numbers to increase. Sexual harassment is contrary to Air Force and DoD policy and Air Force commanders and supervisors should realize that a wide range of administrative and judicial actions are available to serve as a deterrent and to punish sexual harassers. Commanders, supervisors and managers should also know they can prevent, or at least diminish, sexual harassment by emphasizing that the job, the mission, and results are key, and that there is no place for sexual harassment in the Air Force. Diminishing and eliminating sexual harassment should benefit the individuals, the unit, and ultimately, the whole Air Force.

Chapter One

SEXUAL HARASSMENT: AN OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

For the last two decades, the number of enlisted women in the U.S. Air Force steadily grew. At the end of fiscal year (FY) 1965 there were 4,741 enlisted women in the active Air Force. This was 0.62 percent of the total Air Force active enlisted strength. Nineteen years later, at the end of FY 1984, enlisted women numbered 55,335 and comprised 11.4 percent of the enlisted force (17:1-7).

The rate at which women enlist is expected to remain significant. During FY 1984, women were 14.8 percent of all Air Force enlisted accessions. The Air Force recently indicated women may comprise 16 to 18 percent of annual enlisted accessions in the foreseeable future (16:xi).

In addition to increasing their numbers, female airmen are swelling the ranks of enlisted skills that only a decade ago were considered "male" jobs. For example,

. . . since 1978, the percentage of women vehicle maintenance specialists has multiplied more than three and a half times. Similarly, munitions, not generally regarded as a "traditional" career field for women, has grown by a factor of eight. Also, the number of enlisted women in aircrew operations has more than tripled since 1981. Three years ago, no women held "aircrew protection" jobs; today, more than 200 do (12:87).

Since only 8,400 enlisted jobs were closed to women by 1985 due to combat exclusion policies, almost all enlisted positions are open to women (16:3-4).

Given the steady increase of female airmen in the last 20 years and their migration to many previously "male" jobs, the inevitable questions of "How goes it?" arise. Often the query is "How are the women doing?" or "How are the men

getting along with the women and vice versa?" In this context, one crucial male-female issue that is seldom overlooked is sexual harassment.

This paper examines sexual harassment within today's U.S. Air Force enlisted force. Following a general review of the subject, verbal and physical harassment in the active enlisted force are examined via survey and interview. The paper concludes with recommended actions to prevent, or at least limit, the occurrence of sexual harassment within Air Force units.

WHAT IS SEXUAL HARASSMENT?

The Department of Defense (DoD) defines sexual harassment as "'Sexual advances, requests for sexual favors and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature' when:

- o It is stated or implied that submitting to such conduct is a term or condition of a person's job, pay or career;
- o Career or employment decisions are based on a person's acceptance or rejection of that conduct, or
- o It interferes or is intended to interfere with a person's performance, or it creates an 'intimidating, hostile or offensive environment'" (13:4). While this is the official DoD definition, additional insight into sexual harassment will result from examining other definitions.

Sexual harassment, according to U.F. Nieva, "As it is most narrowly defined. . . occurs when a woman is expected to engage in sexual activity in order to get or keep a job, to be promoted or acquire a desirable job, or to avoid being fired or put in an undesirable job" (5:62). L. Farley provides a more specific definition of sexual harassment. According to Farley:

Sexual harassment is best described as unsolicited nonreciprocal male behavior that asserts a woman's sex role over her function as a worker. It can be any or all of the following: staring at, commenting upon, or touching a woman's body; requests for acquiescence in sexual behavior; repeated non-reciprocated propositions for dates; demands for sexual intercourse; and rape. These forms of male behavior frequently rely on superior male status in the culture, sheer numbers, or the threat of higher rank at work to exact compliance or levy penalties for refusal. The variety of penalties include verbal denigration of a woman sexually;

noncooperation from male co-workers; negative job evaluations or poor personnel recommendations; refusal of overtime; demotions; injurious transfers and reassignments of shifts, hours or locations of work, loss of job training; impossible performance standards and outright termination of employment (1:14-15).

It should be noted that the bulk of the literature on sexual harassment appears, either explicitly or implicitly, to be directed solely by men toward women. Nieva, at least, explains this notion:

Although women are not necessarily the only objects of sexual harassment, they are much more likely to be victims than men. . . The typical structure of sexual relationships makes it likely that men act as the initiators, rather than recipients, of sexual contact. In addition, males are more likely to be in positions of authority and dominance and women easily fall into "ingratiating, flattering and deferential manner which projects sexual compliance". . . . The stereotypical case of sexual harassment involves a male supervisor and a female subordinate. . . although a customer or coworker on whom one depends can also exert unwanted pressure toward sexual activity (5:63).

Stereotypically then, when harassment occurs it is the men, who usually have power over women, who are the harassers.

One must not lose sight of the fact, however, that women can be and are in positions of power. MacKinnon maintains that "Sexual harassment, most broadly defined, refers to the unwanted imposition of sexual requirements in the context of a relationship of unequal power" (2:1). Thus, women in positions of power may also be in positions to sexually harass.

WHY HARASS?

Knowing the definition of sexual harassment does not necessarily convey the motivation for sexual harassment. So-called "antifeminist crusader," Phyllis Schlafly when testifying before a U.S. Senate committee reviewing anti-sexual harassment guidelines, indicated that, "'Sexual harassment on the job is not a problem for virtuous women, except in the rarest of cases. Men,'" according to Schlafly, "'hardly ever ask sexual favors of women from whom the certain answer is no. Virtuous women are seldom accosted'" (8:29).

No author reviewed for this paper, however, shared Mrs. Schlafly's position that women were harassed because they were usually "asking for it." R.E. Smith, for example, pointed out that, as in many "non-traditional" Air Force career fields, women workers represent a change and male workers do not always welcome change. Thus, "Pornographic material is sometimes displayed to embarrass women and show them 'their place'" (6:48). Nieva also pointed out that many men fear that newly introduced female workers may use "feminine wiles" to threaten or even seduce them. "Men may retaliate," according to Nieva, "against women's invasion of traditionally male areas in the form of sexual harassment." Nieva points out that this "Harassment further erodes the trust and informality that facilitate women's integration" into the work environment (5:64).

The buddy system and the teamwork that is recognized as fundamental to Air Force operations may also become a tool for sexual harassment. According to R.E. Smith, "In many factory environments, teamwork is essential for effective completion of jobs, and men often refuse to cooperate with a woman who dares to invade male territory. . ." (6:48).

In addition to intentional sexual harassment that is recognized by both harasser and harassee, perceived sexual harassment may occur. In a report released in 1981 by the U.S. Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB), "Sexual Harassment in The Federal Workplace--Is It A Problem?," 45 percent of the federally-employed, civilian women and 15 percent of the male civilian employees reported being sexually harassed in a two-year period (7:3). As R. Leverone pointed out, however, had the MSPB survey asked the question "Have you, within the past two years, sexually harassed a co-worker or a subordinate?", the results would probably fall far short of accounting for all the people who claimed they had been harassed (11:21). In Leverone's words:

If one out of every four women believes she has been sexually harassed within the past two years, it is probably not because someone has made a pass at her. Rather, it is more likely that someone has refused to treat her in a way appropriate for the role she wishes to play--an equal in the workplace (11:22).

M.C. Meyer shed additional light on perceived harassment. "One reason that sexual harassment continues," according to Meyer, "is that the problem itself is complex and difficult to define. The harassers may not know they are harassing. Well intended gestures or remarks of friendship and affection may be received as harassment. Imagined harassment, however, can be as destructive as intended harassment" (4:xiii).

OFFICIAL POLICY ON HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment is detrimental to organizations as well as individuals. "When sexual harassment exists, the total organization is impacted in some negative way. It restricts the ability of individuals to perform. It reduces an organization's capability to deliver those goods or services it is in business to produce" (4:xiii).

The Department of Defense and the Air Force officially prohibit sexual harassment. "In a [1981] memo to service secretaries, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the directors of Defense agencies. . ." Defense Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger directed that "Every supervisor and manager--military and civilian--will take the necessary action to ensure an environment free from sexual harassment . . ." (13:4). Similarly, Air Force Chief of Staff, General Lew Allen, Jr. in a 1980 memo to major commands and separate operating agencies wrote: "'People who engage in this practice (sexual harassment) not only violate basic tenets of professional and human dignity, but also diminish mission effectiveness'" (9:3). In a 1982 joint policy letter to all Air Force personnel, General Allen also stated "'Sexual Harassment is unacceptable conduct and will not be condoned or tolerated'" (14:6).

The next two chapters examine the reported levels of verbal and physical harassment within the Air Force's active enlisted ranks.

Chapter Two

VERBAL HARASSMENT

BACKGROUND

In April of 1985, the United States Air Force delivered to the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. House of Representatives a "study on the accession and utilization of enlisted personnel" (16:ix). Annex five of that report to Congress, entitled Organizational Assessment Study, was "... the largest and most encompassing examination of the effects of women that the Air Force has sponsored" (18:1).

The Organizational Assessment Study developed, and primarily focussed on the data from, the 1984 U.S. Air Force Survey of Work Groups. The survey was designed to fulfill "... the Air Force's objective to understand the dynamics of group functioning in general and the role of women in particular" (18:3-1). As explained in the Organizational Assessment Study,

The Survey of Work Groups focuses on enlisted active-duty Air Force men and women who serve around the world. A sample of 30 bases (22 in the continental U.S., one in Alaska, and seven overseas) and 14,639 enlisted personnel, an average of 488 from each base, were selected according to the sample plan. . . . Over 83% of the initial sample (excluding those who died or left the Air Force) participated in the survey. The 83% who participated represented the 100% sample. This sample is the primary source of information for the analysis of the effects of women on work groups and male-female differences in individual performance and commitment (18:3-1 — 3-2).

The Survey of Work Groups was representative of the active enlisted Air Force and contained four questions that dealt with sexual harassment (18:9-1 — 9-2):

91. In the last four weeks of work, have you personally been the victim of verbal harassment or abuse because of your sex (for example, sexist jokes, offensive cursing) by anyone in your work group?

- A. Yes, 1 time
- B. Yes, 2 times
- C. Yes, 3-4 times
- D. Yes, 5-6 times
- E. Yes, 7 or more times
- F. No (SKIP to Q.93)

93. In the last four weeks of work, have you personally been the victim of physical harassment because of your sex (such as inappropriate physical contact) by anyone in your work group?

- A. Yes, 1 time
- B. Yes, 2 times
- C. Yes, 3-4 times
- D. Yes, 5-6 times
- E. Yes, 7 or more times
- F. No (SKIP to Q.95)

92. & 94. How did you solve the problem? (MARK THE ONE BEST ANSWER).

- A. I did not, the problem continues
- B. Did nothing and the problem went away
- C. Talked to the person(s) causing the problem
- D. Talked with my work group supervisor
- E. Talked about the problem with a friend
- F. Talked about the problem with my spouse
- G. Talked to a counselor or chaplain

The responses to these four questions and the Organizational Assessment Study form the crux of this and the next chapter, dealing with verbal and physical harassment respectively.

VERBAL HARASSMENT

The Organizational Assessment Study revealed that overall, 6.6 percent of the male enlisted respondents reported experiencing at least one case of verbal harassment within the last four weeks. The incidence of verbal harassment for enlisted women during the same period was substantially higher, at 26.7 percent (18:9-3). Though the

period of susceptibility to sexual harassment was two years (versus the four weeks in the Air Force study) in a study of civilians in the federal work place, the civilian study, which did not exclusively differentiate between verbal and physical harassment, also showed a larger percentage of civilian women (42 percent) than civilian men (15 percent) were sexually harassed (7:35).

The Organizational Assessment Study categorized reported verbal sexual harassment by functional work area and sex.

Functional Area	Sex of Respondent		Row Average
	Male	Female	
Civil Engineering	8.7%	30.6%	9.9%
Comptroller	5.5	15.2	7.9
Depot Ops. & Maint.	5.0	24.3	6.7
Grd. Comm., Elec.			
Ops. & Maint.	5.1	29.6	7.7
Intelligence	6.1	24.9	9.6
Medical	7.7	21.1	11.5
Operations-Flight	5.5	28.4	7.7
Manpower & Personnel	4.2	26.0	9.4
Research & Development	3.1	25.1	5.7
Security Police	7.4	40.4	8.8
Supply, Services, & Contracting	8.0	29.6	11.9
Training	7.2	25.1	9.5
Transportation	8.2	21.2	9.7
Weapons Sys. Maint.	6.2	32.7	7.8
Admin., Command, & Other	5.6	21.0	9.0
Column Average	6.5	26.6	8.9

Table 1. Reported Verbal Harassment in the Last Four Weeks, by Functional Area and Sex (Percentages calculated separately for each population subgroup. Statistics are rounded to the nearest tenth (18:9-6).

Another categorization of verbally harassed enlisted members by first digit of their Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) is as follows:

Frequency Percent Row Pct.					
	Col.	Pct.	Female	Male	TOTAL
F I R S T D I G I T O F A F S C	1		3	11	14
			0.28	1.03	1.31
			21.43	78.57	
			0.52	2.25	
	2		74	31	105
			6.93	2.90	9.83
			70.48	29.52	
			12.76	6.35	
	3		65	50	115
			6.09	4.68	10.77
			56.52	43.48	
			11.21	10.25	
4		91	153	244	
		8.52	14.33	22.85	
		37.30	62.70		
		15.69	31.35		
5		24	50	74	
		2.25	4.68	6.93	
		32.43	67.57		
		4.14	10.25		
6		129	79	208	
		12.08	7.40	19.48	
		62.02	37.98		
		22.24	16.19		
7		103	43	146	
		9.64	4.03	13.67	
		70.55	29.45		
		17.76	8.81		
8		25	45	70	
		2.34	4.21	6.55	
		35.71	64.29		
		4.31	8.22		
9		66	26	92	
		6.18	2.43	8.61	
		71.74	28.26		
		11.38	5.33		
TOTAL			580	488	1068
			54.31	45.68	100.00

Table 2. Number of Members, by First Digit of AFSC, who Reported Experiencing at Least One Incident of Verbal Harassment Within the Last Four Weeks (20).

From both tables it appears that verbal harassment is more likely to occur in some career areas/AFSCs than in others. Caution must be exercised before making such interpretations however, because cell sizes for functional working areas and AFSC by gender in many instances were small (18:9-8).

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

By controlling for a number of personal and group characteristics, the Organizational Assessment Study used multivariate analysis to explore the notion that there might be "...measurable characteristics of work groups and individuals. . . that explain this observed pattern of harassment. . . ." Multivariate analysis was also used to examine "Whether the incidence of harassment is the same across all groups in each functional area" (18:9-12). The result of the multivariate analysis was that "... group size, supervisor quality, and the interaction of group size and percent female. . ." were found to be "significant determinants" (18:9-13) of verbal sexual harassment.

The larger the working group, the more likely was verbal harassment to occur, significant at the one-percent level. Two possible related explanations of this relationship are that: 1) the larger the working group, the more likely are there to be female "targets" for male verbal harassers; 2) as working groups increase in size, the relationships between working group members may become less personal and more prone to instances of verbal harassment (18:9-14).

The relationship between how one rated one's supervisor and whether one had experienced verbal harassment in the previous four weeks was negative, and significant at the one-percent level. That is, the higher one rated one's supervisor, the less likely was one to report verbal harassment (18:9-14).

The relationship between verbal harassment and working group size, however, was more complex than the relationships for size of work group and quality of supervisor. It is depicted in Figure One. Specifically, and at the five-percent level of significance, 1) "... changes in group size have a smaller effect on predicted harassment as percent female [in the working group] approaches. . . 36.2%"; 2) for working groups with more than 36.2 percent women, "... an increase in group size decreased verbal harassment, while for groups with a proportion of women less than 36.2%

an increase in group size increases the probability of harassment" and 3) "... for a given group size, an increase in the proportion of females will always decrease the incidence of verbal harassment" (18:9-17).

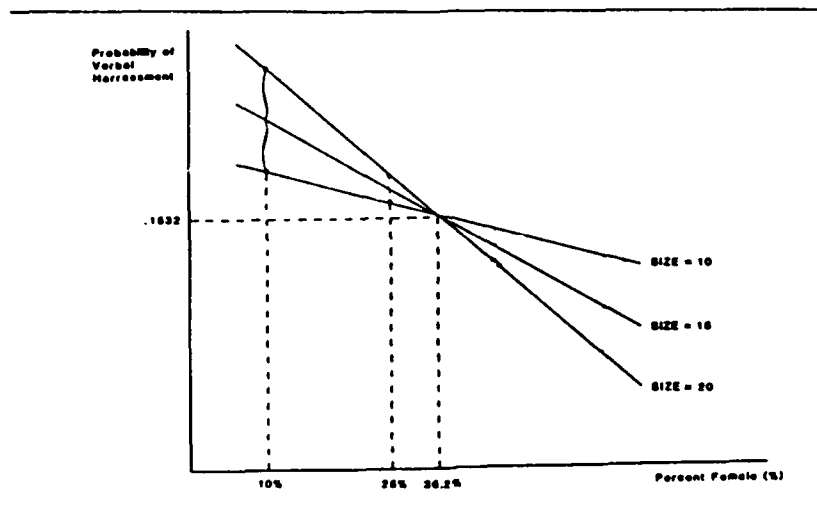


Figure 1. Predicted Probability of Verbal Harassment for Selected Changes in Group Size and Percent Female (18:9-16).

After controlling for various group and individual characteristics, the Organizational Assessment Study's multivariate analysis demonstrated that functional working areas (e.g. civil engineering, medical, weapons systems maintenance, etc.) did not have a statistically significant effect on the probability of verbal sexual harassment. The group characteristics that were significant predictors of verbal harassment were (18:9-18):

- o pace of work;
- o work environment index;
- o incidence of personnel shortages; and
- o incidence of equipment shortages.

The Organizational Assessment Study specifically found that groups with faster paced work were less likely to experience harassment at the five-percent level of significance. Similarly, the work environment index (i.e. "hazardous conditions, working outdoors, and exposure to extreme temperatures" [18:9-19]) was positively linked to incidence of verbal harassment, at the one-percent level of significance. Also, individuals with personnel and/or equipment shortages were more likely to report verbal harassment than those without such shortage(s), at the one-percent level of significance.

With respect to individual characteristics, "Women with at least some college education" were "more likely to cite an incidence of verbal harassment than other women" (18:9-19), at the five-percent level of significance. Similarly, women in their first term of service (i.e. less than four years of active duty) were more likely to report incidents of verbal harassment than those with four or more years of service (18:9-19), at the one-percent level of significance.

The positive relationships between educational level and youth and inexperience (as shown in years of service) to probability of experiencing verbal harassment were also evident in the study of harassment among civilian federal employees. According to that study, civilian "women most likely to be sexually harassed are:

- o young (under 34)
 - o single or divorced
 - o well-educated (college degree or higher)
 -
 - o working in any occupation, but particularly as a trainee or in a professional/technical position. . ."
- (7:42).

RESOLUTION OF VERBAL HARASSMENT

As is evident in the following table, men and women dealt with verbal harassment differently.

Problem Resolution	Sex of Respondent		Row Average
	Male	Female	
Problem Continues	21.3	28.1	23.1
Did Nothing; Problem Went Away	17.0	14.2	16.2
Talked to Person Causing Problem	19.0	29.8	21.9
Talked with Group Supervisor	5.4	7.6	6.0
Talked with a Friend	3.5	4.8	3.8
Talked with Spouse	32.2	13.7	27.2
Talked to Counselor or Chaplain	1.9	1.8	1.7

Table 3. Resolution of Verbal Harassment That Occurred Within the Last Four Weeks, by Sex. (Column percentages rounded to the nearest tenth.) (18:9-21)

Women tended more than men to confront their harassers, while more men than women talked to their spouse in an effort to resolve verbal harassment. These efforts to resolve verbal harassment were similar to the findings in the harassment survey of civilian federal employees. "Most [civilian] victims responded to sexual harassment by ignoring it, but few find that technique improves the situation. The most assertive actions are found to be the most effective" (7:63).

VERBAL HARASSMENT SUMMARY

More than one in four Air Force enlisted women (26.6 percent) reported experiencing verbal harassment within the previous four weeks. Only 6.6 percent of male airmen were similarly harassed. Functional working areas and AFSC were not statistically significant predictors of verbal harassment in this study. Female airmen who were most likely to be verbally harassed:

- o worked in larger groups
- o tended to rate their supervisors lower than those who were not harassed
- o worked in a somewhat, or very slow, work-pace environment
- o worked outdoors, in hazardous environment, in extreme temperatures
- o experienced personnel and/or equipment shortages in their work groups the previous week
- o educationally, had some college and beyond
- o had less than four years of active duty

While men and women differed in their approaches to resolving verbal harassment, only 28.1 percent of the women and 21.3 percent of the men had yet to resolve a harassment problem they reported as having occurred within the previous four weeks. It is also significant to note that resolution of these relatively few remaining harassment problems had not been ruled out by the men or women.

Chapter Three

PHYSICAL HARASSMENT

BACKGROUND

Chapter Two presented the pertinent information about the Organizational Assessment Study's approach to sexual harassment.

PHYSICAL SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The Organizational Assessment Study reported that 6.2 percent of the female airmen surveyed reported being physically harassed in the previous four weeks. Only 1.7 percent of male airmen reported physical harassment (18:9-4). While the overall incidence of physical harassment was far less than that of verbal harassment (26.7 percent of women and 6.6 percent of men), it is interesting to note that, as a percentage of their gender, women were about four times more likely to report verbal and physical harassment than men.

The relationship between gender and reporting physical harassment was also evident in the study of harassment of civilian federal workers (7). Twenty-six percent of civilian federal women surveyed reported occurrences of "deliberate touching, leaning over, cornering or pinching" (7:37, B-2), while only seven percent of the civilian men reported same.

Stratifying reports of physical harassment in the last four weeks by functional work areas revealed the following:

Functional Area	Sex of Respondent		Row Average
	Male	Female	
Civil Engineering	1.9%	8.3%	2.3%
Comptroller	1.9	3.5	2.3
Depot Ops. & Maint.	1.4	17.6	2.9
Grd. Comm., Elec. Ops. & Maint.	1.3	8.9	2.2
Intelligence	1.5	2.5	1.7
Medical	3.3	5.4	3.9
Operations-Flight	0.9	2.7	1.0
Manpower & Personnel	1.6	5.5	2.6
Research & Development	1.8	12.5	3.1
Security Police	1.8	9.1	2.1
Supply, Service, & Contracting	2.0	6.8	2.9
Training	1.1	9.7	2.2
Transportation	1.1	3.2	1.3
Weapons Sys. Maint.	1.7	6.8	2.0
Admin., Command, & Other	1.6	4.6	2.2
Column Average	1.7	6.2	2.2

Table 4. Reported Physical Harassment in the Last Four Weeks, by Functional Area and Sex. (Percentages calculated separately for each population subgroup. Statistics are rounded to the nearest tenth.) (18:9-7)

A classification by first digit of Air Force Specialty Code (AFSC) of members who reported experiences of verbal harassment also appears noteworthy.

F I R S T D I G I T O F A F S C	Frequency Percent Row Pct. Col. Pct.	Female	Male	TOTAL
	2	11 6.11 78.57 10.68	3 1.67 21.43 3.90	14 7.78
	3	11 6.11 64.71 10.68	6 3.33 35.29 7.79	17 9.44
	4	16 8.89 12.11 15.53	22 12.22 57.89 23.57	38 21.11
	5	6 3.33 40.00 5.83	9 5.00 60.00 11.69	15 8.33
	6	22 12.22 55.00 21.36	18 10.00 45.00 23.38	40 22.22
	7	18 10.00 78.26 17.48	5 2.78 21.74 6.49	23 12.78
	8	5 2.78 38.46 4.85	8 4.44 61.54 10.39	13 7.22
	9	14 7.78 70.00 13.59	6 3.33 30.00 7.79	20 11.11
TOTAL		103 57.22	77 42.78	180 100.00

Table S. Number of Members, by First Digit of AFSC, Who Reported at Least One Incident of Physical Harassment Within the Last Four Weeks (20).

As with verbal harassment, however, the Organizational Assessment Study's multivariate analysis sheds light on whether functional working area is a successful predictor of sexual harassment.

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS

By "controlling for a number of personal and group characteristics" (18:9-12), the Organizational Assessment Study's multivariate analysis produced some interesting findings on physical harassment. As with verbal harassment, the following factors were similarly related to physical harassment: group size, at the five-percent significance level; supervisor quality, at the one-percent significance level; and group size-percent female interaction, at the one-percent significance level (18:9-9 -- 9-10). (See Chapter Two for an explanation of these relationships.)

Unlike for verbal harassment, the work pace, the environment index (outdoors, hazardous, and extreme temperatures), and the existence of personnel shortages were not significantly related to the occurrence of physical harassment. The existence of equipment shortages within the last week, however, as with verbal harassment, was positively linked to the likelihood of physical harassment. The relationship between equipment shortages and physical harassment was significant at the five-percent level (18:9-10).

Contrary to the findings for verbal harassment, a woman's educational level, and youth and inexperience, as measured by years of Air Force service, were not significantly related to experiencing physical harassment. Women who worked more than 40 hours the previous week, however, were more likely to be physically harassed than those who did not. This relationship was significant at the five-percent level (18:9-11). "This finding," according to the Organizational Assessment Study, "is consistent with the notion that individuals working overtime are (1) at risk for longer periods, and (2) exposed during higher-risk periods (e.g. at night, on weekends)" (18:9-20).

This "overtime factor," however, did not surface in the study of civilian sexual harassment. "The typical working hours of an employee--day time or other arrangements such as night-time, weekends, shifts, or frequent overtime--seems to bear no important relationship" in the civilian study "to whether the employee is subjected to bothersome sexual harassment" (7:53).

One factor that was negatively related to the incidence of physical harassment was the military status of one's spouse. Enlisted women whose husbands were also in the service were less likely to report experiencing physical harassment, at the one-percent level of significance (18:9-20).

RESOLUTION OF PHYSICAL HARASSMENT

Unlike the approach to resolving verbal harassment, physically harassed men and women tended most often to talk to the person causing the trouble. This was the most frequently sighted first course of action for enlisted men and women who were physically harassed.

Problem Resolution	Sex of Respondent		Row Average
	Male	Female	
Problem Continues	18.0	25.8	19.8
Did Nothing; Problem Went Away	23.9	15.5	21.9
Talked to Person Causing Problem	26.6	33.6	28.3
Talked with Group Supervisor	8.6	9.9	8.9
Talked with a Friend	6.2	8.5	6.7
Talked with Spouse	12.6	5.6	10.9
Talked to Counselor or Chaplain	4.2	1.2	3.5

Table 6. Resolution of Physical Harassment That Occurred Within the Last Four Weeks, by Sex.
(Column percentages rounded to nearest tenth.) (18:9-21)

After talking to the harasser, men and women varied in proportions as to how they would resolve physical harassment.

PHYSICAL HARASSMENT SUMMARY

Though the overall reported incidence of physical harassment was far less than that of verbal harassment, enlisted women nevertheless reported physical harassment at

a rate about four times higher than enlisted men (6.2 percent versus 1.7 percent). As with verbal harassment, the Organizational Assessment Study's multivariate analysis demonstrated that one's functional working category (e.g. comptroller, intelligence, weapons systems maintenance, etc.) was not a statistically significant predictor of physical harassment.

Female airmen who were most likely to be physically harassed:

- o worked in large groups
- o tended to rate their supervisor lower than those who were not harassed
- o experienced equipment shortages in their work groups the previous week
- o worked more than 40 hours the previous week
- o were not married to another military member.

The single most preferred course of action among men and women to resolve physical harassment was to talk to the harasser. After this option, men and women varied by proportion of their gender in the resolutions they pursued.

Chapter Four

CAVEAT AND PERSPECTIVE

CAVEAT

When exploring the subject of sexual harassment in the U.S. Air Force, it is important to recognize perspective and proportion. While there is little doubt that physical and verbal harassment do occur in the Air Force, as they do in civilian organizations, judging the severity of self-reported harassment is difficult at best. As the Organizational Assessment Study pointed out,

Individuals differ in their perceptions of what constitutes sexual harassment. Using a written questionnaire to collect information on the incidence of harassment does not yield objective measures of frequency and severity of sexual harassment. . . . Thus, the. . . findings should not be construed as accurate indicators of the magnitude of sexual harassment because of unknown measurement errors imbedded in the survey responses (18:9-2).

The study of harassment of civilian federal employees contained similar cautions. "That men and women look at sexual behavior differently is important to keep in mind when looking at the reported experiences. . . ." Also, "Sexual behavior that may be offensive to women may be more or less offensive to men when they are the recipients" (7:23).

More detailed research and analysis should be undertaken to better understand the degree and nature of sexual harassment in the Air Force. For example, in Chapter Three it was reported how women, as a percentage of their gender, were about four times more likely to report physical harassment (6.2 percent of women) than men (1.7 percent of men). Using these percentages, one could make a case that more men than women are physically harassed and that women physically harass men at a greater rate than men physically harass women.

To illustrate, in a hypothetical Air Force organization of 1000 people, suppose 800 are men and 200 are women. Application of the appropriate physical harassment rates would yield:

$200 \times 6.2\% = 12.4$ women physically harassed
 $800 \times 1.7\% = 13.6$ men physically harassed

From the above, it is "apparent" that, in our case, more men than women are physically harassed.

To continue this line of reasoning, one can also make the case that, in our example, women physically harass men at a much greater rate than men physically harass women:

$\frac{12.4 \text{ women physically harassed}}{800 \text{ men (potential harassers)}} = 0.015 = \text{male harassment rate}$

$\frac{13.6 \text{ men physically harassed}}{200 \text{ women (potential harassers)}} = 0.068 = \text{female harassment rate}$

Note that in the above example, women harass men by a factor of more than 4.5 times (0.068 versus 0.015).

That one person (man or woman) may harass more than one person is not accounted for in the above equation, but they are nevertheless illustrative. Such multiple harassing was found in one study (7). Sexual harassment within one's gender is also not addressed. Perceived sexual harassment (incidents without perpetrators) is also not adequately dealt with in the above equations. Clearly, research and analyses beyond the scope of this paper are in order and continued caution and clear thinking are required with each investigative step. Until such research is completed, readers must exercise caution when examining self-reported sexual harassment and must particularly refrain from attempting to assess the severity of such harassment.

ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVE

In addition to administering and analyzing the data from some 15,000 airmen's questionnaires, the Organizational Assessment Study also interviewed two senior officers (usually the wing commander and the deputy commander for maintenance) at each of the 30 surveyed bases. While this group was not a representative sample of U.S.A.F. senior

officers, the interview results nevertheless yielded unique insights and valuable perspectives for assessing results from the U.S. Air Force Work Group Survey. Sexual harassment was virtually absent from these senior officers' lists of major problems in their units.

It is also noteworthy that "... 85% of the officers interviewed believe women have neither a positive nor a negative effect on [unit] performance" (18:10-7). None of the senior officers cited their current number of women as having a negative effect on morale or on incidence of sexual harassment in their units (18:10-13). This view from the top of units, while statistically non-representative, nevertheless provides a valuable perspective on the severity of sexual harassment in the Air Force.

Chapter Five

RECOMMENDATIONS

Women are here to stay in the Air Force, and if the last 10 years are an example, one can expect that the number of women in previously "traditionally male" jobs will increase. Male and female airmen have reported incidents of physical and verbal sexual harassment in the Air Force. Sexual harassment "is detrimental to employee morale, productivity, unit cohesion, and to mission accomplishment; it is also a prohibited personnel practice, and it is unlawful" (15:1). This chapter outlines what commanders and supervisors can do to stop, and more importantly, to prevent sexual harassment in their units.

First, commanders and supervisors must realize that "There are administrative and/or judicial actions available . . . in cases where sexual harassment are [sic] found to have occurred" (19:31). Lieutenant Colonel Jon S. Wheeler, an Air Force lawyer, gave expert counsel on these options in "Sexual Harassment: A Military Response to a Military Problem," an Air War College research report (19).

Some of the administrative actions a commander may want to consider in a confirmed sexual harassment case included in reverse order of severity: change of duty section, shift, or job; verbal reprimand; comment on the offender's efficiency report; written reprimand; removal from supervisory positions; removal of noncommissioned officer status; removal from promotion list; administrative reductions in grade; and in repeated more serious cases, administrative separation (19:31).

In addition to administrative action, Wheeler devoted an entire chapter to the "Application of The UCMJ to Sexual Harassment Incidents" (19:33-47). The following table, derived from that chapter and the Manual for Courts-Martial, United States 1984 (5), summarizes incidents of sexual harassment and possible application of the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) to them.

ACT	UCMJ ARTICLE	MAX PUNISHMENT
--Rape.....	120	--Death
--Carnal Knowledge.....	120	--15 years confinement at hard labor (CHL)
or "statutory rape"		--20 years CHL
--Sodomy.....	125	--7 years CHL
--"Copping a feel";.....	134	
grabbing person's private parts, etc.		
--Indecent assault.....	134	--5 years CHL
o If also intent to rape		--20 years CHL
o If also intent to commit sodomy		--10 years CHL
--Attempted physical....	128	--Six months CHL
touching (assault & battery)		
--Adultery.....	134	--1 year CHL
--Acts that violate.....	134	--Varied
good order & discipline		
--Threat associated.....	134	--Varied
with sexual acts (con- duct prejudicial to good order and discipline or service discrediting)		
--Communicating.....	134	--6 months CHL
indecent language		
--Solicitation.....	134	--Same as for offense being solicited (max confinement: 5 years)
--Provoking speech.....	117	--6 months CHL
and gestures		
--Voyeurism.....	134	--4 months CHL
(Disorderly Conduct)		
--Indecent Exposure.....	134	--4 months CHL
--Superior sexually.....	93	--1 year CHL
harassing a subordinate		
--If officer is.....	Also	--1 year CHL
harasser	133	
--Supervisor fails.....	92	--2 years CHL
to act against sexual		(if general
harassment incidents		order)
prohibited by order		--1 year CHL
		(if other order)

Table 7. Possible Application of UCMJ to Instances of Sexual Harassment.

From the above chart, it is evident that with the UCMJ, commanders and supervisors can punish sexual harassers. Preventing sexual harassment, however, is usually more productive and efficient than punishing offenders.

Commanders and supervisors can begin to prevent sexual harassment in their units by first admitting that sexual harassment may exist (or at least might begin to exist) in their organization. As L. Farley pointed out, even well-meaning supervisors may be blind to potential problems:

. . . they are so deeply steeped in the right of male prerogatives they are virtually oblivious to the sexual harassment of their female employees. These same presumptions will then compound the problem by keeping subordinates from expressing an opposite point of view. It is the very broad-casting of these presumptions through manners, perceptions, and jokes that act on women like injunctions against speaking up. Then men will deny there are any problems because they've never been told about them (1:151).

Fortunately, more sexually harassed individuals, particularly women, are speaking up today (4:xiv) and reporting incidents. All commanders and supervisors, however, must sensitize themselves to the possibility of sexual harassment in their units.

Once sensitized, commanders and supervisors must let it be known to all people in their units that "equal opportunity" is the rule and practice. Major General Jeanne Holm eloquently described equal opportunity:

In the broadest sense, equal opportunity means honest and fair treatment for all of our people, in all respects, all of the time and must be applied to all aspects of Air Force life.

It means that neither race, nor color, nor creed, nor sex will be a determinant in "who" gets "what" or "when". . . It does not mean that there are no differences between people nor that everyone has the same capabilities, limitations and ambitions. Some people are smarter than others, some perform better than others, some are motivated differently than others (10:11).

U.F. Nieva echoed Holm's comment when Nieva described a "work world that was characterized by equality for women and men." In such an equal opportunity environment,

Options and opportunities would be based on talent, not sex. Not only should exceptional women have the same opportunities as exceptional men, but working women who are mediocre should also be treated similarly to their male counterparts. Clearly, equity would not necessarily mean that the sex composition must be perfectly balanced within each sphere of activity. Equity, not uniformity, is the criterion (5:135).

Once commanders and supervisors get the equal opportunity word out to all their personnel, their every action and word must exemplify and support the policy. "A rule of thumb here is that any comment or compliment to a woman is appropriate and in good taste if a similar comment can be made to a male. Thus it is all right to say, 'That is a nice suit/dress you are wearing.' However, 'Gee, you have nice legs' or "'Boy, are you a hunk'" "does not meet this acid test" (11:22).

Turning to the work environment, commanders and supervisors must emphasize that the job, the mission, and results are key and that traditional sex-roles (e.g. "macho men" or "helpless women") have no place in the Air Force work environment. "One move that would benefit women workers (as well as their male colleagues) would be to make work-related expectations and norms as clear and as behaviorally focused as possible, so that attention is directed toward work-relevant factors rather than to irrelevant norms drawn from sex-role ideals. Such a move," according to Nieva, "would also make it less necessary to make inferences about non-observable aspects such as worker traits and motivations, which are more vulnerable to bias" (5:127).

With equity as the official and actual policy within a unit, and aggressive enforcement of that policy by commanders and supervisors, sexual harassment is not likely to flourish. M.C. Meyer summed up the situation neatly in one paragraph:

However you are affected by sexual harassment--as harasser, the harasser or the manager--there are two common threads running through our discussion of what to do: responsibility and communication. Not one of the three parties involved bears the single burden for resolution of the problem. No one deserves to be harassed, but the harasser cannot expect . . . the government to solve the problem without taking some of the responsibility for resolution upon himself or herself. The harasser cannot pass the fault onto anyone else; no matter what kind of signals he or she got, or thought he or she got, no matter what the circumstances, he or she must accept the fact that as harasser, the

responsibility, consequences, and attempted resolution rests primarily upon him or her. The manager cannot let bias or emotion cloud his or her responsibility, either. As the focal point of resolution, the manager's responsibility looms large. Objectivity and sensitivity are the keys to responsible resolution (4:145-146).

The Department of the Army and the Air Force National Guard Bureau published excellent, practical advice in their pamphlet, "Prevention of Sexual Harassment: Guidelines for Commanders, Managers and Supervisors." Their checklist of "Dos" and "Don'ts" contains succinct advice for all commanders and supervisors. They are:

- o DO take positive action to address issues of sexual harassment before they occur.
- o DO make it clear to your commanders, managers, and supervisors and other personnel what sexual harassment is, and that you will not tolerate it.
- o DO designate a person or persons to whom military . . . and civilian employees can bring their complaints about sexual harassment.
- o DO publish the options available to personnel who feel they are victims of sexual harassment.
- o DO promptly and thoroughly inquire into any complaint or other evidence of possible sexual harassment and ensure that retaliation does not occur as a result of a sexual harassment complaint.
- o DO develop appropriate sanctions to be applied against any individual who engages in sexual harassment.
- o DO take prompt and appropriate disciplinary action in instances where sexual harassment has occurred.
- o DO establish written guidelines to be used in making personnel decisions, especially employment, promotion, award, disciplinary and compensation decisions, and make sure they are followed.
- o DO keep written records showing the reasons for personnel decisions.
- o DO provide leadership by example in applying and promoting high standards--integrity, conduct and concern for the public interest.
- o DO insure a professional and healthy work environment.
- o DO insure that all military, civilian, . . . personnel are trained in the prevention of sexual harassment.
- o DON'T permit sexual jokes, teasing, and innuendoes to become a routine part of the work atmosphere.
- o DON'T allow employment decisions to be made on the basis of reasons other than merit.
- o DON'T allow social behavior to become confused with professional behavior (15:6).

Armed with the above checklist, sensitized to how/where sexual harassment might occur, and dedicated in word and deed to a policy of equity, commanders and supervisors can stop and, more importantly, prevent sexual harassment. After successfully pursuing the above measures, commanders and supervisors will discover they have a more cohesive, effective force, demonstratively more capable of accomplishing the mission. Thus, the men and women in the unit will benefit, the unit will benefit and, most of all, the Air Force will benefit from the elimination of sexual harassment.

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